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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 000830

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TAGS: PGOV KCRM KJUS ASEC SNAR GT

SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES NEW MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT

REF: GUATEMALA 821

Classified By: Ambassador James Derham for reasons 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (U) On July 2, President Colom announced Francisco Jose Jimenez Irungaray, current Director of the General Directorate for Civil Intelligence (DIGICI), as the new Minister of Government, and Emilio Arnoldo Villagran Campos as the new Vice Minister of Government, following the June 27 deaths of Minister Carlos Vincio Gomez Ruiz and Vice Minister Edgar Hernandez Umana (reftel).

¶2. (C) President Colom called the Ambassador on July 1 to notify us of his intent to name Jimenez Minister of Government and to ask if we had any objection to his nomination. After checking with Embassy law enforcement and other sections, we informed Colom that we had no derogatory information about Jimenez. Human rights leader Helen Mack and CICIG Commissioner Carlos Castresana also told us that they believe Jimenez is a reasonable choice to head this critical Ministry.

¶3. (U) Prior to his appointment as Director of DIGICI, Jimenez served as Technical Secretary of the Security Council of the Presidency (2004- 2005) and as Secretary of Strategic Analysis in 2003. He also served as the Guatemala Project Director for the War-Torn Societies Project, an international UN human rights project. Jimenez has a doctorate in philosophy from Gregorian University in Rome and a bachelors degree in philosophy and political science from San Carlos University in Guatemala. He is Coordinator of the Guatemalan Network for Democratic Security, and Coordinator of Post-Graduate Studies and Professor of Political and Social Philosophy at Rafael Landivar University.

¶4. (SBU) Villagran, aka Daniel Ruiz, reportedly served as a commander of the Rebel Armed Forces during the internal conflict. He was a first-place candidate (ANN) on the 2007 National List for Congress, but did not garner enough votes to get elected. Villagran has been a political analyst and consultant for local NGO "Incidencia Democratica" (IDem) since 2000. He has a degree in political science from San Carlos University.

Derham